

## Claims

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for regulating electronic media content, said apparatus comprising:

5 an interface arrangement which receives media input;

a controller which attributes at least one credit value to at least one portion of received media input; and

a regulator which regulates the presentation of received media input at a presentation medium based on the at least one credit value attributed to the at least one  
10 portion of received media input.

2. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein:

said controller is adapted to attribute a positive credit value to received media input construed as credit-bearing content; and

said controller is adapted to attribute a negative credit value to received media  
15 input construed as debit-bearing content.

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3. The apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein:

said controller is adapted to attribute a credit rating associated with an end user of the presentation medium; and

said regulator is adapted to control the presentation of received media input based  
5 on the attributed credit rating.

4. The apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the credit rating represents a threshold value and said regulator is adapted to cease the presentation of debit-bearing content upon the threshold value being breached.

5. The apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein:

10 media input received at said interface arrangement bears an initial credit value; and

said controller is adapted to adjust the initial credit value of received media input based on at least one predetermined criterion for adjusting the initial credit value of received media input.

6. The apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said controller is adapted to:

15 attribute a credit balance to an end user of the presentation medium;

monitor the presentation of received media input at the presentation medium; and

adjust the credit balance based on the presentation of received media input at the presentation medium.

7. The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said controller is adapted to  
5 subtract from the credit balance upon debit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium and add to the credit balance upon credit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium.

8. The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein:

the received media input includes pre-recorded media content; and

10 said regulator comprises a decoder for decoding the pre-recorded media content, as to permit the presentation of the content, based on the credit balance.

9. The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said controller is further adapted to adjust the credit balance based on factors external to the received media input.

10. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a  
15 television.

11. The apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the received media input includes at least one of: a television commercial and at least a portion of a television show.

12. The apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said controller comprises a set-  
5 top cable TV converter box.

13. The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a computer monitor.

14. The apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the received media input includes internet multimedia content.

10 15. A method of regulating electronic media content, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving media input;

attributing at least one credit value to at least one portion of received media input;

and

regulating the presentation of received media input at a presentation medium based on the at least one credit value attributed to the at least one portion of received media input.

16. The method according to Claim 15, wherein:

5       said attributing step comprises:

          attributing a positive credit value to received media input construed as credit-bearing content; and

          attributing a negative credit value to received media input construed as debit-bearing content.

10       17. The method according to Claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

          attributing a credit rating associated with an end user of the presentation medium;  
and

          said regulating step comprising the step of controlling the presentation of received media input based on the attributed credit rating.

18. The method according to Claim 17, wherein the credit rating represents a threshold value and said controlling step comprises ceasing the presentation of debit-bearing content upon the threshold value being breached.

19. The method according to Claim 16, wherein media input received at said  
5 interface arrangement bears an initial credit value and said method further comprises the step of adjusting the initial credit value of received media input based on at least one predetermined criterion for adjusting the initial credit value of received media input.

20. The method according to Claim 16, further comprising the steps of:  
attributing a credit balance to an end user of the presentation medium;  
10 monitoring the presentation of received media input at the presentation medium;  
and  
adjusting the credit balance based on the presentation of received media input at the presentation medium.

21. The method according to Claim 20, further comprising the steps of subtracting  
15 from the credit balance upon debit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium and adding to the credit balance upon credit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium.

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22. The method according to Claim 20, wherein:

the received media input includes pre-recorded media content; and

said method further comprises the step of decoding the pre-recorded media content, as to permit the presentation of the content, based on the credit balance.

5        23. The method according to Claim 20, further comprising the step of adjusting the credit balance based on factors external to the received media input.

24. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a television.

25. The method according to Claim 24, wherein the received media input includes  
10    at least one of: a television commercial and at least a portion of a television show.

26. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a computer monitor.

27. The method according to Claim 26, wherein the received media input includes internet multimedia content.

28. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for regulating electronic media content, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving media input;

5       attributing at least one credit value to at least one portion of received media input;  
and

regulating the presentation of received media input at a presentation medium based on the at least one credit value attributed to the at least one portion of received media input.

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